



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Alaska Fire Service  
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<http://www.blm.gov/ak>



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Expires: 2/1/2010

To: All AFS and FDO Employees

From: Manager, Alaska Fire Service  
Manager, Fairbanks District Office

Subject: Employee Claims for Loss or Damage to Personal Property

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum explains Northern BLM procedures for filing personal property claims against the federal government, under the Military Personnel and Civilian Employees' Claim Act of 1964 (MP&CE).

Types of property loss or damage not covered under this IM:

- ▶ **Loss or damage to Government property:** Refer to the appropriate property officer.
- ▶ **Contract Claims:** Processed by a Contracting Officer (Procurement).
- ▶ **Third Party Claim (Tort Claim):** Contact Financial Services (FS) for assistance.

The attachment will assist you in determining the type of claim to file.

**Background:** The MP&CE outlines rights of employees, official volunteers and casuals to claim reimbursement for loss or damage to personal property that occurs in performance of duty.

The Department of Interior Manual Part 451.3.2, *Loss or Damage-Employee's Personal Property*, states "damage or loss must be incident to the employee's service, and possession of the property must be reasonable, useful, or proper in the circumstances." Refer to the Departmental Manual Part 451 and the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, Chapter 70 for additional information and guidance.

Alaska's Regional Solicitor (RS) delegated determination authority for BLM employee claims of up to \$1,000 to the State Director (SD), who re-delegated authority to the Manager-Alaska Fire Service (AFS) for Northern BLM employees. The RS processes employee claims over \$1,000 and claims submitted for reconsideration.

**Policy/Action:** All employees are responsible to know the rights and responsibilities for personal property claims, to apply the information in this IM, to show due diligence and care for all property used in performance of duty.

Supervisors and managers are responsible to review claims and provide written statements relative to the claim. Incident supervisors are responsible to document the circumstances that pertain to the loss or damage.

Forms and documents referenced in this IM are available at:

<http://afshome/afs/organization/bustech/incbusmgmt/incbusmgmt.php> (AFS internal website) or <http://fire.ak.blm.gov/afs/organization/bustech/incbusmgmt/incbusmgmt.php> (AFS external website).

Financial Services is responsible to process all employee claims for Northern BLM.

**Reimbursable Items:** A Reimbursable Items List has been established for typical field-use items. FS surveys local stores and catalog suppliers biennially to validate current average prices and determine a maximum reimbursable amount.

If an item on the Reimbursable Items List is available from the BLM or Fire Cache inventory, but you choose not to use it due to personal preference, you might not be reimbursed. If you claim an item not on the Reimbursable Items List, you must explain why the item is necessary to the performance of duty. Justification is required for specialized equipment or items claimed. The documentation you submit and statements from your supervisor and others are key elements of the adjudication process.

Reimbursement is based on the purchase price/value or estimated repair cost less depreciation.

**Reporting Procedures:** Complete an Employee Claim Package and submit the forms with supporting documentation to FS within 60 days of property loss or damage. If the BLM forms are not available, use local forms or plain paper. The completed package must be signed by:

- ▶ Section Chief or supervisor and FMO or Branch Chief (AFS employees).
- ▶ Field Office Manager and District Manager (FDO employees).

An example of a completed Employee Claim Package can be found on the website.

The Master Rental Insurance Coverage, Secondary Personal Effects Insurance covers loss, damage, or theft to individuals who rent vehicles with their government charge card. Coverage is limited to the government cardholder who rented the vehicle and signed the rental agreement. You must report the loss to the Master Card Assistance Center within 30 days of the occurrence and submit a claim within 180 days. Because this coverage is secondary, you must complete the employee claim process and/or file with your private insurance prior to submitting a claim to Master Card.

**Processing Procedures:** Your claim will always be routed through your home unit and processed by FS. If you are away from your duty station, report the occurrence to your on-site supervisor and complete the required forms, following local, established procedures. Submit your completed, original forms to FS through supervisory channels.

Once your claim is processed, you will receive a letter, a copy of the Administrative Determination, and if approved, a Payment Voucher, and directions for processing the reimbursement payment. Payment is normally made by Direct Deposit.

If you are dissatisfied with the Administrative Determination, you may request reconsideration by filing the appropriate documentation with the RS. The RS issues a written determination within six months of receipt.

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** None

**Time Frame:** This IM is effective immediately.

**Contact:** For technical assistance regarding employee claims, contact Financial Services at 907-356-5781.

Signed by:  
John E. Gould  
Manager, AFS

Robert W. Schneider  
Manager, FDO

Authenticated by:  
Shirley Goforth  
Records

Attachment

### Guide for Loss or Damage Claims

Example of Loss or Damage	Claim Type				Remarks/Point of Contact
	Employee	Tort	Contract	Government Property	
Personal gear burned over	X				Incident Supervisor; Zone or Home Unit Supervisor; Financial Services
Personal gear lost or stolen in performance of duty	X				Incident Supervisor; Zone or Home Unit Supervisor; Financial Services
Privately Owned Vehicle (POV) damaged when authorized for use in temporary duty (TDY) travel		X			Supervisor; Financial Services
POV damage occurred enroute to a meeting from AFS/FDO		X			Supervisor; Financial Services
POV damaged in AFS/FDO parking lot		X			Supervisor; Financial Services
Government contractor equipment sustains damage while in performance of contract			X		Procurement
Government equipment damaged/destroyed				X	Incident Supervisor; Zone or Home Unit Supervisor; AFS Warehouse
General public incurs property loss due to government action		X			Incident; Zone; Field Office Manager; Financial Services
General public sustains personal injury or property loss/damage while on BLM property		X			Incident/Agency; Line Officer; Safety Officer; Financial Services